



**ASPIRE LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS**

Governor Induction Pack – Including Governor Visit Protocols

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Signed: Executive Headteacher	M Talbot
Signed: Chair of Governors	M Hall

Document History

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Aspire Learning Partnership of Schools (ALPS) Induction Pack for New Governors

Dear

Welcome to our governing body. We are delighted that you have agreed to be a school governor. We hope that you will enjoy working with us to help our schools provide the best possible opportunities for our pupils.

This pack has been put together by governors. We hope it will give you useful guidance in the early stages of your governorship and help you feel part of our team.

Governor Services (Milton Keynes Local Authority) will usually send you a welcome letter and a publication for new governors from the National Governance Association. Together with information from our schools, this will help you through the first stages of your governorship.

ALPS has signed up to GovernorHub, a web based system designed to help governors and governing boards operate more effectively and efficiently, and you will be emailed details of how to log on to this platform.

Some of the content may be very unfamiliar to you as much has changed in education since we were all in school, but given training and support from the rest of the team it will all begin to fall into place. You can access excellent local and national support for governors online, for example; www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/mkgovernors and www.nga.org.uk

The full governing body meets four times a year. All governors are also members of one (or more) committees which meet at other times to discuss issues in depth and report back to the full governing body.

You will be invited to join one (or more!) committees as soon as you feel able to, and you're welcome to go along to any of these meetings to get to know what goes on and to help you decide where you would be happiest to make a contribution.

The main point to remember is that we were all new at one time! We welcome questions and discussion of points that may be puzzling to you – they may be matters we all want to know about as well, or they could be issues that we have worked out and we can explain them to you.

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Best wishes

Chair of Governors

Getting to know the Governing Body and the schools.

To begin with, we want to help you get to know the rest of the governors, so soon after your election or appointment, the Chair/Vice Chair will contact you and inform you when the next meeting is and what will be happening at it.

The Chair/Vice Chair will also arrange to give you a tour of the school and introduce you to the staff, as well as giving you copies of any relevant written material.

You will find the school web-sites an excellent source of information, do visit us at:

www.greenleysjunior.org

www.greatlinfordprimaryschool.co.uk

You are very welcome to visit the schools and become involved in activities. You must always make prior arrangements with staff, as they are busy and this will enable them to prepare any information in advance. Visit protocols can be found later in this pack. The office team are always very helpful in helping to contact staff or the leadership team.

If you would like to help/volunteer with the children in school, please contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team to arrange a time that suits you both.

Training

As we strongly encourage governors to participate in training, we purchase the MK Council's development package for governors. This allows all of us to attend as many training courses as we like each term, we also receive whole governing body training sessions on topic of our choice.

Governor Services (Milton Keynes Local Authority) will send you details of how to sign up for governor training. Regular bulletins regarding training courses are posted on GovernorHub. Please keep our Development Governor informed of any courses you have attended.

There is a course, "Induction & Refresher – governorship for newly appointed and re-appointed governors" which we strongly recommend. New governors will also need to attend "Safeguarding Children – the governor's role"

We report back (briefly) on courses we've attended at the next full governors' meeting, and copy any materials given out at the training if they may be of use to other governors.

Meetings

The whole Governing Body or its committees meet at least once a term. Each meeting has a clerk who arranges the meeting, circulates the agenda and background papers, takes minutes and supports the governing body in numerous ways. Your chair and vice-chair are elected each year at a full governing board meeting in the summer term from among those governors who are not employed at the school.

Your governing body may delegate specific tasks to committees but, ultimately, all governors have collective responsibility for the decisions that are taken. The chair can only act alone in a real emergency, when there is not time to call a special meeting.

Preparing for Meetings:

As a new governor the following guidance may be useful:

- Be clear about the remit of the meeting
- Read papers that are sent out before the meeting
- Order your file to correspond to the order of the agenda
- Make a note of any questions and areas that you don't understand
- Ensure that you have completed any tasks that you were asked to do
- Make a note of any involvement that you have had with the school in order to record your action within the minutes. This will demonstrate and evidence base how well the governing body know the school and reflect the level of involvement
- Accept a share of the responsibility for work required
- Ask challenging questions, e.g. 'What difference has this made? Or 'What was the impact?'
- Reflect on the meeting and note what could have been done differently and what went well

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Governor

Governors are most effective when they are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and use the knowledge gained to challenge the school, understand its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to shaping its strategic direction.

The governing board provides strategic leadership and accountability in schools. It has three key functions:

- Overseeing the financial performance of each school and making sure its money is well spent
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the educational performance of each school and its pupils
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

They also carry out a number of other important duties, which include:

- Monitoring standards in the schools
- Agreeing and monitoring targets for pupil performance
- Making sure that the National Curriculum is taught and that the needs of all pupils, including those with additional needs, are met
- Agreeing aims and developing policies
- Monitoring how the budget is spent
- The appointing and dismissing of staff
- Hearing appeals and grievances
- Setting standards for pupils' behaviour and discipline
- Making sure school buildings are welcoming and safe
- Setting and monitoring aims and policies
- Keeping parents and the local communities informed about the work of the schools

In order to fulfil your responsibilities you will be expected to:

- Attend meetings of the full governing body
- Be an active member of one or more Committees or Working Parties which look in more detail at particular aspects of the school's work
- Join other governors in attending training and development sessions on the roles and responsibilities of governors
- Be a positive and supportive ambassador for the school
- Visit the school occasionally during the school day, to see how the governing body's policies are being implemented and to get to know the staff and pupils better
- Be a good team player: to respect the confidentiality of governing body discussions and to be loyal to the corporate decisions you take
- Seek information and clarification in order to ensure that the school provides the highest possible quality of education
- Be involved in making strategic decisions that contribute to long-term development in the school
- Help to systematically monitor their school's progress towards meeting agreed development targets
- Support honest, insightful self-evaluation by the school; recognising problems and supporting the steps needed to address them
- Contribute to reflections on the governing body's own effectiveness

'Holding the School Accountable'

As a governor it can be challenging to make accurate judgements about the school's effectiveness and to contribute to school improvement. There is a wealth of guidance available locally and nationally. It is key to ask testing questions and to seek firm evidence on which to make judgements.

Outline of key responsibilities and evidence sources

Area of Responsibility	Sample Questions	Evidence Sources
Standards / Attainment / Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How do the school results compare to National expectations? •Are standards consistent across subjects? •Do all pupil groups attain equally well? •What is the school doing to improve standards? 	EHT/HoS reports ASP (Analyse School Performance) SATs results School Improvement Plan
Pupil Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Do pupils make expected progress? •Is progress consistently good across subjects? •Are pupils making enough progress to close any gaps in attainment? •Do all pupil groups attain equally well? •What is the school doing to improve pupil progress? 	EHT/HoS reports ASP (Analyse School Performance) Subject Leader and SENDCo reports Pupil Progress Interviews School Improvement Plan
Quality of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are results and progress good or better? •Do lesson observations judge teaching to be good or better? •Do pupil work scrutinise show high standards of work, presentation and marking? •Is the curriculum balanced, varied and stimulating? •Do pupils work hard and enjoy their learning? •What is the school doing to maintain and improve teaching? •What is the school doing to improve and extend the curriculum? 	As above Observation Data Improvement Partner reports Timetables and curriculum planning Pupil interviews Governor visits Staff Training and Development records Allocation and roles of support staff
Effectiveness of Leadership and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is the school doing well? •Are all statutory requirements met? •Does the school provide value for money? •Are children safe and thriving? •Are parents pleased with the school? •Are there good standards of staff retention and recruitments? 	As above Policy statements Monthly budget monitoring reports Parent questionnaire responses Pupil interviews Levels of attendance Health and Safety records Safeguarding records Management structure
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Do pupils feel safe? •Are standards of behaviour consistently good? •Does the school meet recruitment regulations? •Is the building secure? •Is the site well maintained? •Are there good Health and Safety policies and practices? 	Pupil Interviews Lesson Observations Behaviour and exclusion records School policies Accident records Site Health and Safety Checks Single Central Record

Protocols for Governor Visits

Introduction

As stated, the governing body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the schools, to monitor standards and be held to account for conduct and performance. Visiting each school is the best way to increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge and inform strategic decision making.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the Head of School who has the responsibility of the day-to-day management of the school.

Purposes of visits

For Governors:

- To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- To recognise and celebrate success
- To develop relationships with the staff and pupils

For Teachers:

- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not about

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on progress of own children
- Pursuing personal agenda
- Monopolising school/teacher time

Protocols for visits

1) Preparing for a visit

Check that the purpose of the visit is clear and is linked to the school's development/Improvement Plan. What are the relevant school Policies? Discuss an agenda with the Head of School, subject lead and/or class teacher well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable. Discuss with the staff if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance

data. Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for. To make the best use of time, please submit questions to staff in beforehand.

2) During the Visit

The Governor will:

- Visit on behalf of the governing body
- Remember it is not an inspection
- Be punctual
- Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be
- Get involved with the children if and when appropriate
- Observe discretely
- Not distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest
- Be courteous, friendly not critical
- Interact but not interrupt
- Retain focus on the purpose of the visit
- Listen to staff and pupils
- Ensure that the visit is no longer than agreed

The Teacher will:

- Decide with the governor what their role will be
- Introduce the governor to the children and any other adults that are present
- Make a chair available
- Interact with governor explaining what is happening in the lesson or activity
- Encourage the governor to talk with the children
- Make any relevant documents available

3) After the visit

Governors should thank the staff and pupils for supporting their role. The governor and teacher should discuss what has been observed and use the opportunity to clarify any issues that are unclear. For example, did the visit have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how? Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.

The governor should feed back to the Head of School in the first instance, then write a short summary within 7 days of the visit 'as a lay governor' of what was learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. A draft should be circulated to the Head of School and any staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. The aim is to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved prior to reporting on the visit at the next appropriate committee/governing body meeting. This will allow other governors to ask questions or make suggestions which may require further follow up action.

Reports should be honest and positive; outlining successes, any questions and areas of concern and recording any suggestions. Governors should reflect how the visit has enhanced relationships and the effectiveness of the Governing Body.

Visit Focus

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:

- Particular aspects of the curriculum including particular subjects, key stages or classes
- Attainment standards
- The use made of the buildings or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special educational needs
- The use of IT equipment
- The impact on the school of any changes e.g. reduced classes in a key stage
- Relative numbers of questions and responses to the teacher from boys to girls

The visit can take various forms:

- Attending a whole lesson or activity session
- Snapshots of several lessons
- Pupil interviews
- Walks around the school
- Meetings with subject leaders
- Looking at pupil's work

Informal Visits

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity, such as;

- The chair making a regular visit to see senior leaders
- To lend a helping hand with a school event
- To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting
- To help in a class
- Attend a school function or educational visit

It is important that the purpose is clear and distinct from a formal visit.

Appendix 1 Visit report template

Governor Visit

Confidential

Governing Body Visit Report

Name:

Date:

Purpose of Visit:

Monitoring Activities Completed:

Link with School Improvement Plan / Key issues /Governing Body Monitoring & Evaluation Framework including objectives/targets:

Account of Governor visit:

Key Strengths Identified:

Any strategic issues arising for the Governing Body:

Agreed future actions (reporting/follow up):

Additional comments:

Date presented to the governing body:

This report must be completed after each visit, should not exceed one side of A4, checked with all those involved within seven days, and sent to the Head of School.